

SC392549

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 3 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home, and 2 children were spoken with during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/06/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
17/06/2024	Full	Good
05/03/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/02/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

The home provides a warm, stable and nurturing environment where children make good progress. Children benefit from strong relationships with staff, regular education attendance and positive experiences, supporting a sense of belonging and normality.

Targeted conversations and support improve children's confidence, safety awareness and emotional understanding. Leadership is supportive, with effective oversight and staff development. However, care planning for one child has been ineffective and safer recruitment practice is not consistently followed.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a warm, nurturing environment. Children are settled and making progress. The children enjoy positive relationships with staff and one another. Redecorating of the home is ongoing to help improve the quality of the environment. Children have had an input on the colour schemes for the refurbishment to help give them a sense of ownership.

Children attend education regularly and engage well. All children are placed in mainstream schools and are making appropriate academic progress. Transitions into new educational settings, including secondary school and college, have been well supported by staff, enabling children to manage change positively and with confidence.

Friends are welcomed into the home, and children spend time playing games and relaxing together, contributing to a sense of normality and belonging. Children also access community-based activities such as youth clubs and regularly spend time with friends outside the home. These opportunities support children to experience a lifestyle that is in line with children their own age.

Children participate in a wide range of activities with staff, and records of key-work sessions reflect the trusting relationships that have been developed. Children living in the home for extended periods benefit from continuity of care, which promotes stability, emotional safety and a strong sense of belonging. Children describe staff as being like family and value the shared experiences they have had.

Children's cultural needs are well understood and met by staff. When necessary, staff actively seek appropriate alternatives to ensure that children's individual identities and preferences are respected and supported.

Targeted support to develop self-esteem is evident, particularly for one child. Staff record this work sensitively and demonstrate strong, caring relationships. As a result of this

work, one child has been supported to reflect on past experiences and develop a more positive understanding of relationships.

Care planning for one child has not been effective. There is a lack of clarity regarding the child's future arrangements, and their views about remaining in the home have not been adequately escalated by the manager. This shortfall has the potential to affect the child's sense of stability and future planning.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Incidents do not often occur in the home. Staff complete a wide range of supportive conversations with children to promote their safety. There is extensive and meaningful work completed with one child around healthy relationships and online safety. This includes both structured sessions and more informal chats. Safeguarding discussions are embedded naturally into daily interactions, improving children's awareness and ability to keep themselves safe.

Staff engage children in reflective discussions about their behaviours and risks in a way that encourages openness and honesty. This approach has helped to create a safe environment where children feel able to share mistakes without fear of judgement, enabling them to learn and develop safer strategies.

Children are appropriately supported to take age-appropriate risks, which contributes positively to their growth and independence. One child has been supported to safely access opportunities in the community. This support is carefully managed to ensure that children feel secure while experiencing new opportunities that broaden their life experiences.

While staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the risks relevant to each child, risk management plans do not give staff clear direction around these identified risks. Although risk assessments are reviewed regularly, they are not consistently updated or maintained to reflect the changes in children's circumstances. This limits their effectiveness in guiding staff practice and ensuring that a consistent approach to safeguarding children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The arrangements around management of the home are effective. The introduction of the new responsible individual means the manager now receives regular supervision sessions and is well supported. This has provided a valuable outlet for reflection and has had a positive effect.

The manager has a clear vision for the home and sets consistent expectations for how staff should practice. However, the manager has appropriately identified that further work is required to improve staff's ability to reflect on their practice. Ongoing work is in place to develop this, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement.

The manager has positive and trusting relationships with children and staff. This contributes to a settled, supportive and inclusive culture in the home, where children and staff feel valued. As a result, the home provides a positive environment in which both children and staff can thrive.

The manager is proactive in developing staff knowledge and skills. Regular team meetings include brief, targeted learning sessions that respond to the emerging needs of children. Furthermore, the manager and deputy manager maintain effective oversight of practice in the home. Supervision sessions are regular and provide staff with opportunities to reflect on their work and relationships with children. Staff speak positively about this support and feel able to discuss their practice openly.

When incidents occur, the manager demonstrates effective oversight and challenge. Any practice that is not in line with the team's ethos is addressed promptly. Discussions with both children and staff are consistently completed and are reflective in nature. These ensure that children's voices are heard and that learning is identified to improve future practice. This approach supports a culture of accountability and continuous development.

Safer recruitment checks have not been consistently completed. One on occasion, leaders did not seek appropriate references for a new employee. This means leaders have not ensured that all steps have been taken to assess the new employee's suitability.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation (5)(a))	1 July 2026
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))	1 July 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This includes ensuring that relevant plans for children are detailed and updated to give staff direction on how to care for children's changing needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC392549

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Responsible individual: Mark Wade

Registered manager: Susan Kells

Inspector

Gary Smithson, Social Care Inspector

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